

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

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TAGS: SCUL, OEXC (HANKS, NANCY)

SUBJECT: AMERICA DAYS

1. THIS TELEGRAM TRANSMITS "A DRAFT OF NANCY HANKS' REMARKS" TO THE LEAGUE OF FINNISH-AMERICAN SOCIETIES ON OCTOBER 27. HER ASSISTANT EXPECTS THAT THE DRAFT WILL BE POLISHED AND REVISED, BUT THE ADDRESS IS CLOSE ENOUGH TO FINAL VERSION FOR NEWS MEDIA TO EXCERPT STATEMENTS OF SUBSTANCE IF DESIRED. TEXT FOLLOWS:

2. IT IS WONDERFUL TO BE HERE IN FINLANDIA HALL ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEAGUE OF FINNISH-AMERICAN SOCIETIES.

I AM, OF COURSE, VERY HONORED TO BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY TO YOU THE CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES IS BASED
-- ON MANY AREAS OF COMMON INTERESTS WHICH WE SHARE
-- ON MANY YEARS OF RESPECT THAT ENABLE US TO UNDERSTAND DIFFERENCES
-- AND, MOST ASSUREDLY, ON THE TALENTS OF MANY CREATIVE

INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BROUGHT THE JOY AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE ARTS TO BOTH OUR PEOPLES AND TO ALL NATIONS.

ONE OF THE GREAT STRENGTHS OF THE ARTS IS THAT WHILE THEY
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KNOW NO GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES, THEY MAINTAIN AND BUILD ON THEIR ETHNIC BASES. THERE IS A UNIQUENESS. THERE IS A SPECIALNESS.

IN OUR COUNTRY, FOR A LONG TIME WE SPOKE WITH GREAT PRIDE ABOUT BEING A "MELTING POT." NOW, I CANNOT FOR THE LIFE OF ME UNDERSTAND WHY ANY ONE, LET ALONE A NATION OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WOULD WANT TO BE CALLED A POT OF ANY KIND, LET ALONE A MELTING ONE. HOWEVER, WE WERE VERY PROUD THAT SO MANY PEOPLE FROM SO MANY DIFFERENT CULTURES HAD BUILT OUR COUNTRY. WE APPARENTLY THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE GOOD IF WE THOUGHT OF OURSELVES AS THE SAME.

WHAT WE NOW RECOGNIZE, OF COURSE, IS THAT OUR QUALITY IS BASED ON THE DIVERSITY OF OUR GREAT ETHNIC AND CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND NOT THEIR SAMENESS. THIS BEAUTIFUL HALL IN THIS MAGNIFICENT BUILDING, AND THE SAARINEN MUSEUM NEARBY, REEMPHASIZE IN A MOST DRAMATIC WAY WHAT A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE FINNISH DESIGN HAS HAD ON MY COUNTRY. YOU SET STANDARDS IT WOULD DO US WELL TO FOLLOW.

WE ARE VERY PROUD OF WASHINGTON'S DULLES AIRPORT. AND OUR JOY IS ADDED TO BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IT WAS THE FINNISH GENIUS OF ARCHITECT EERO SAARINEN THAT MADE IT POSSIBLE. THE WORKS OF JAN SIBELIUS ARE HEARD REGULARLY IN CONCERT HALLS ACROSS OUR LAND. TWO OF YOUR GREAT SINGERS--TOME KRAUSE AND MARTTI TALVA--ARE AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA. AND, ANOTHER FINN, CONDUCTOR LIEF SEGERSTAM, WILL MAKE HIS DEBUT THERE IN DECEMBER.

FINNISH DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE ARE WORLD FAMOUS--YOUR FABRICS, FURNITURE AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS GRACE OUR HOMES AND OUR OFFICES.

AND, OF COURSE, THERE IS KAUKKONEN AND HIS GROUP, THE JEFFERSON AIRPLANE, WHO THE YOUNGER HALF OF MY COUNTRYMEN CHEER--AND THE OLDER HALF PRETEND NOT TO LISTEN TO. YET, WE SEE THE EFFECT OF ROCK MUSIC ALL AROUND US.

AND THERE IS THE FAMOUS SUOMI COLLEGE CHOIR THAT TOURS IN OUR COUNTRY FROM ITS HOME BASE IN MICHIGAN AND WILL RETURN
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AGAIN TO YOURS IN 1975. AND I KNOW THE ALL-MICHIGAN YOUTH SYMPHONY PLAYED IN THIS HALL IN AUGUST.

WHEN I THINK OF ALL THE WONDERFUL CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS FINLAND HAS MADE TO MY OWN COUNTRY AND TO THE WORLD AND WHEN I READ THE STATISTICS ABOUT CULTURAL LIFE IN FINLAND, I AM A BIT CURIOUS AS TO HOW THE FINNS HAVE TIME TO DO ANYTHING BUT GO TO THE THEATRE AND YET I KNOW THAT IS NOT TRUE.

BUT, ACCORDING TO A RUMOR IN THE UNITED STATES, THERE ARE ALMOST 2,000,000 THEATRE GOERS IN FINLAND. TRANSLATED TO OUR POPULATION BASE THAT WOULD MEAN ABOUT 88 MILLION

AMERICANS WOULD BE THEATRE GOERS.

I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THERE IS A TREMENDOUS TREND TOWARD THE ARTS IN THE UNITED STATES--AND I WISH TO ELABORATE ON THAT POINT AS THE FOCUS OF MY REMARKS--BUT I WANT TO STATE THAT THERE ARE NOT 88 MILLION PEOPLE TREKING TO LIVE THEATRE PERFORMANCES: ALTHOUGH I KNOW QUITE A FEW PRODUCERS WHO WISH THIS WERE SO.

DESPITE THE INTEREST OF PRESIDENTS AND OTHER NATIONAL LEADERS OVER THE YEARS, THERE WAS LITTLE TO NO INVOLVEMENT OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN THE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY. WHEN ONE REALIZES THAT THE CONGRESS GOT INTO A KNOCK-DOWN, DRAG-OUT FIGHT OVER SOME MURALS THAT WERE TO BE PAINTED IN THE HALLS, ONE CAN UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING NATIONAL POLICY IN THE ARTS.

THERE WAS, HOWEVER, IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION, THE VERY SUCCESSFUL WPA FEDERAL ARTS PROJECTS. IT WOULD NOT BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT TO SAY THAT THE WPA, WHICH WAS SET UP NOT TO STIMULATE CREATIVITY, BUT RATHER TO KEEP PEOPLE ALIVE, MADE NEW YORK THE ART CAPITAL OF THE WORLD, ESTABLISHED THEATRE AS A VITAL ART FORM IN THE COUNTRY, AND HAS LEFT US A LEGACY OF PAINTINGS, POSTERS, WATERCOLORS, MURALS AND SCULPTURE OF UNTOLD VALUE. HOWEVER, CONGRESS DID NOT APPROVE OF SOME OF THE PLAYS AND OTHER WORKS, AND THE FEDERAL ARTS PROJECTS WERE QUITE ABRUPTLY TERMINATED.

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FROM TIME TO TIME, DARING CONGRESSMEN INTRODUCED LEGISLATION. ONE PIECE WAS INTRODUCED IN 1954. IT WAS BRILLIANT AND WELL TYPED. I TYPED IT. IT WAS ALSO LAUGHED OFF THE FLOOR OF CONGRESS WITH AN EPITAPH OF THE "TOE-DANCE BILL."

THEREFORE IT WAS ALMOST 200 YEARS BEFORE WE ESTABLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES A PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION.

WE HAVE HAD TO WORK HARD TO CONVINCE OUR LEGISLATORS THAT GOVERNMENT CAN NO LONGER IGNORE THE CULTURAL NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE AND THAT IT IS PART OF THE LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT LITERATURE, POETRY, MUSIC, DANCE, ARCHITECTURE, PAINTING, SCULPTURE, THEATRE, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND FILM. WE HAVE HAD TO WORK HARD BECAUSE WITHOUT THE TRADITION THAT EUROPEANS HAD, WE WERE CONSTANTLY ASKED WHY WE SHOULD SPEND TAX MONEY ON ART WHEN THERE ARE SO MANY NECESSARY AND DEMANDING AREAS WHICH NEED ATTENTION. WHY, WE WERE ASKED, SEND POETS AND PAINTERS TO THE CLASSROOMS OF THE ILL-FED, ILL-CLOTHED, AND ILL-HOUSED? WHY SUPPORT MUSEUMS AND ORCHESTRAS AND DANCE GROUPS WHEN

THERE ARE STILL FAMILIES IN THE COUNTRY LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE?

THOSE QUESTIONS TOTALLY IGNORED ONES THAT MIGHT GO LIKE THIS: WHY SHOULD A POOR CHILD BE DEPRIVED OF THE EXHILARATION OF SPENDING TIME WITH A POET IN A CLASSROOM, OF SEEING A PLAY WHICH MAY AFFECT HIS CONCEPT OF LIFE? WHY SHOULD THE SUBSTANCE OF CREATIVITY AND ALL THAT IT MEANS BE RESERVED ONLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE EDUCATED AND WEALTHY CLASSES?

THE RECORD OF FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS IN THE EIGHT YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE IS THE ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS. THREE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND BOTH PARTIES IN THE CONGRESS HAVE AFFIRMED THE RIGHT OF ALL THE CITIZENS OF OUR NATION...OF ALL ETHNIC AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS AND OF ALL AGES...TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ARTS.

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AS A RESULT, FUNDING FOR THE ENDOWMENT HAS RISEN FROM \$8,200,000 IN 1969, WHEN MY TENURE BEGAN, TO THE PRESENT LEVEL OF ALMOST \$61,000,000. A GIANT STEP AHEAD, BUT NOT NEARLY ENOUGH TO SATISFY THE DESIRE AND THE NEED OF THE PEOPLE TO BE PART OF OUR GREAT CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENJOY THE ARTS IN ALL THEIR FORMS ...IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AS WELL AS IN THE CONCERT HALLS AND IN THE MUSEUMS.

THEREFORE, IN ALL TALK OF GOVERNMENT MONEY I ALWAYS STRESS THAT FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES ARE NOT ONLY NEW PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF THE ARTS--THEY ARE JUNIOR PARTNERS, INDEED.

IT IS THE PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL AND PRIVATE MONIES THAT HAVE BUILT THE CULTURAL RESOURCES IN WHICH WE TAKE PRIDE.

THE UNITED STATES IS APPROACHING ITS 200TH BIRTHDAY AS A NATION. AND AS WE PREPARE TO CELEBRATE THIS BICENTENNIAL, WE ARE GIVING THOUGHT TO THE KIND OF NATION WE WANT TO BE IN OUR THIRD CENTURY AND BEYOND. IN DOING SO, WE ARE GLANCING BACK AT THE GOALS OUR FOREFATHERS SET FOR US WHEN THEY TALKED ABOUT THOSE INALIENABLE RIGHTS: LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS."

THOMAS JEFFERSON REFERRED NOT TO THE HAPPINESS PRODUCED BY GADGETS AND POSSESSIONS, BUT TO THE KIND OF HAPPINESS THAT COMES WHEN MEN AND WOMEN FIND A RELEASE OF THEIR POWERS IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT DRAWS THEM TO THE ENJOYMENT OF BEAUTY AND EXCELLENCE. THIS IDEAL REASSERTS ITSELF TODAY, AND IN CONTEMPORARY PARLANCE, IN OUR CONCERN FOR "THE

QUALITY OF LIFE."

I SUBMIT THAT WE HAVE DONE RELATIVELY WELL IN PURSUING
OUR RIGHTS TO LIFE AND LIBERTY, AND THAT WE HAVE DONE VERY
POORLY IN OUR PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, WHICH WAS GIVEN EQUAL
BILLING BY OUR FOUNDING FATHERS. WE SEEMED TO THINK THAT
THE THREE GOALS WERE SEPARABLE AND THAT WE COULD WAIT FOR
THE THIRD.

WE HAVE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS
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RIGHT--BUT AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO A HOPED-FOR ERA OF PEACE,
WE ALSO LOOK FORWARD TO A CIVILIZATION IN WHICH THE ARTS
CONTRIBUTE FULL MEASURE TO OUR LIVES, JUST AS THEY CON-
TRIBUTE TO YOUR LIVES IN FINLAND. KISSINGER

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